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Jobs

3. "To earn a living, women must take all sorts of heavy jobs. They sweep chimneys, drive trucks, work in the construction industry (where they usually carry loads) and on the docks. They work side by side with men. They dress like men, wear old discarded men's suits, tie their hair in a dirty handkerchief, use bad language and forget that they are women. If they have no particular qualifications, they actually prefer such physical work as it pays better than the lower office jobs.
4. "But most of the women would much prefer to stay at home and do housework. The alleged independence of a job of one's own is not valued at all. It is true that if a woman does a man's job, she also gets a man's wage. She receives no sick leave. If she is pregnant, she gets no leave prior to childbirth, only three months at full pay after the birth. If she does not return to work after these three months, she loses her job.
5. "Membership in the CP is important for getting a job, though one may even get an administrative post without it - through "social promotion" ("awans spoleszny"). A charwoman may get an office job if she has charred long enough and has been active politically. Such office workers are a terrible nuisance: sometimes they can hardly read or write. At the Specialists Polyclinic in Szczecin there was a cleaning woman, Eugenia Wojciechowska, who had worked there for three and a half years. Because she was a CP member she was promoted to be a doctor's secretary. She made a mess of everything, but Dr. Jakubowski, the manager of the polyclinic and a Communist, refused to do anything, saying she would learn in time or be sent to a course. No top job can be obtained by a woman, even with the best of training, if she is not a CP member. [redacted] a brilliant young woman lawyer in Poznan whose father had been a mag jur (Master of Law) [redacted] got a job at Szczecin as secretary in a law court with a salary of 450 zl. Female Communists without any training have jobs at 800-900 zl monthly. Sometimes qualified women are dismissed to make room for a CP activist.

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Appearance

5. "The regime would like to make the women think of nothing but their work, but whenever they can they dress as prettily as possible. There is no active propaganda against this but one must be somewhat careful. If a woman is really chic, the UB may ask questions: from where did you get these things; do you have relatives abroad who send them to you?
- "There are beauty parlours in the large towns, but they are expensive and the cosmetics they sell are not good. Some sell smuggled goods too, eg Max Factor lipsticks costing 287 zl. A facial and makeup cost 45 zl. A good permanent wave in Warsaw (about the same quality as the West) costs 180 zl. An ordinary permanent costs 35 zl, but it makes black hair turn reddish. The dying of grey hair costs 120 zl, but the dye comes out in a few weeks.
- "The interest in fashions is great. There is only one fashion magazine in Poland - Swiat Mody - which costs 10 zl and appears once a year. No patterns are available. The ready-made clothes industry offers little variety. Each model is made up in thousands of copies. Everybody dresses more or less alike, mostly in cheap garments as a good woollen dress costs 1200 zl. Even a pretty silk scarf costs 500 zl. Everybody who is at all good at dressmaking sews for herself and invents her own fashions. Mostly this means making over one's old things.

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9. "Young people study or work most of the time. If they have free moments between lectures, they queue for the family. Nobody can afford to spend much money on amusements: a theatre ticket costs 9-15 zl, a cinema ticket 3.60 - 6 zl and one must queue for several hours. A glass of coffee with some milk and sugar and a cake would cost nine slotsy.

Household Equipment

10. "Furniture is very expensive: a bedroom set costs 4500 zl; a diningroom set, six thousand zl; a couch, 800-1800 zl; a table and six padded chairs, 1200 zl; an iron bedstead with a mattress is 600 zl; a kitchen set (table, cupboard, 2 chairs, a bench, a towel rack) costs 2500 zl. An aluminium saucepan holding 2.5 lt costs 25 zl; a plate, five to seven zl; a simple spoon, knife or fork 2.50 zl; an aluminium teakettle 60 zl; a coffee grinder 75 zl; a thin Turkish towel 18 zl; a sheet 60 zl; a pillow slip, 35 zl; a quilt 180-600 zl. The quilts are of fairly good material but stuffed with cotton and wool, not down."

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